

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Hart Associates

Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana

Hart Associates, LLC Embraces Lean and Green

Client Profile:

Hart Associates, LLC, is a custom lighting, furniture and accessories manufacturer that caters to international interior designers, architects, specifiers, and showrooms. A family business founded in 1965, Hart Associates produce chandeliers, table and floor lamps, sconces, accent furniture and accessories exclusively designed by owner Charles Hart. The company employs 30 people at its facility in Ruston, Louisiana.

Situation:

Hart Associates was familiar with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL), a NIST MEP network affiliate, from past projects. Although Hart Associates had adopted Lean principles, Hart realized that integrating lean and green was the most responsible next step. A green collar workforce would generate growth opportunities and generate new cost savings. MEPOL suggested Hart become a member of the National Green Suppliers Network (GSN), an innovative industry-government partnership that links manufacturers to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and MEP's nationwide network. The objective of GSN is to help manufacturers identify opportunities for improvements to reduce environmental impacts while implementing the tried and true principles of lean manufacturing: reduce non-value added activities in order to increase productivity and customer satisfaction.

A green and clean value stream map was proposed to focus on several areas in the factory where cost savings were easily identified. Dave Thomas, deputy director for MEPOL, explains, "Lean eliminates D.O.W.N.T.I.M.E. (Defects, Overproduction, Waiting, Non-utilized resources, Transportation, Inventory, Motion, and Extra processing). By adding the environmental aspect to Lean principles, 'Clean' adds F.E.W.E.R. (Full use of raw material, Energy efficiency, Water conservation, Eliminating toxic material, and Reduction) of packaging wastes, emissions to air and water, solid and hazardous wastes, and regulatory obligations and risks."

Solution:

Since this was the first GSN project for MEPOL, Thomas contacted the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to facilitate the event. TMAC facilitated, the current and future Value Stream Mapping (VSM) exercise to eliminate non-value-added activities and to identify cost savings measures. Specific changes made included fixing the overhead air supply lines that were leaking and turning motors off when not being used and utilizing all of their brass waste. There was also a huge discovery made in the way work was being scheduled, grouped and prioritized through the shop. The first step in the process (cutting) was being fed by a list grouped by item number. The last step in the process (packaging) was being fed by a list grouped by customer. This lack of consistency was resolved by smaller, better prioritized groupings for cutting materials and packaging the products.

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Results:

- * Reduced production time by 15 percent.
- * Reduced energy consumption by 33 percent.

Testimonial:

"MEPOL is a very professional organization that is dedicated to helping manufacturing in Louisiana. MEPOL's dedicated employees have helped to inspire Hart employees to make our factory more productive and to understand the importance of saving time, money, and the environment. All of MEPOL's efforts are greatly appreciated."

Sandra Hart, Secretary Treasurer